WT: I spent -- might as well say, half more than half of my life working in a mine, and then to see what miners have got today -- I'm not saying that it's not tough, you know, but then in Michel they're working underground, because I went to Michel. And I talked with a man come out of the mine there, black, like, you know. He was a big man foreign accent, big man, I says is there any way for me to go round here and look, you know, because I was stick my nose in because you know, just inquisitive, you know, because everything was black with coal dust. Everything just a mess, and when you see like, these little houses, they tumbles down and everything else, like there's still some people living in them. You know. I could see all these little shacks, like, you know, that the miners had in them days. And you see what the miners got today. You know. And I said, Boy, good for the miner! He's got -- at least, at last, got something. You know.

MB: I guess the original houses here were like that, when the settlers first came. That's probably what they saw, eh?

WT: Ah! Go up to Extension! And there's a -- it's too bad, I should take you up there. When you drive down into Extension, down into the valley there, and up towards the school and then just go over towards the bluff and that way. Because there was a -- Johnnie Harness -- him and I went to school -- up you know the house that you turn down on Richardson Road there -- there's a beautiful home on the other side of the road there. Well then they're two people born and brought up in Extension. Wargo; and Harness. Well, when we were kids going to school, Johnnie would say to me, Come on, Waino, cause we start running, and we run right across to the school, all the way home to his place, and his mother would make a big jug of coffee for us. I liked that. And they lived in just a little place, well the house wasn't as big as this room -- the whole house!
And it's still standing, two little places like that yet! There! Yes. Them people. The Wargo's and them lived further up on the hillside. Whereas the old mining town was way up on top, where years ago, that was in the 18th century. There was a mining town up there. There used to be a little lokie, like we call it. One of them small lokies, came down like that, down and then down into our mines, like you know. Then the coal was dumped down into the Canadian Collieries place. It was all Canadian Collieries anyway.

MB: Well I can't figure out where the town would be up above.

WT: You know where Gogo's farm is up there, cattle farm? Well it's up there. Up in the backside, up there. I think he had coal rights and timber rights, old man Gogo, and then there was a Finnish family there, because kids was coming from school from there, and that was a -- when I was a kid going to school, and then when I started to work in the mines, I think it was just before the 19th century, that the men moved from I think it was Northfield or Wellington. To Extension. Canadian Collieries told the men fetched to move and you know, maxed the houses at Extension. And then after so many years there they made a move again to Ladysmith. Once they got the railroad made, you see. Because the coal went through -- you know when you're coming along -- when you're going up White Rapids, and you just got to go up there a little ways, there's a road going up there, you cross the road there, that was the railroad. There. The coal came from Extension, and it went right down to by Fiddick's down there, Fiddick's Junction down there. And that's where it went down to the CPR. The CPR took it down to Canadian Collieries. Until the Canadian Collieries got their line made right through. On their own line made through, Dunsmuir. Down to Ladysmith.

MB: You say that down here where you're living was near Richardson's mine?

WT: Yes, Richardson's mine is just up here on the bluff here. I worked in one year, in 39 to 40, I worked there.
MB: You mean that was still going?  --No, couldn't have been.

WT: It was 1939 we tried to make it. In the mine. Mr. Clifford hired me, and Billie Richardson. And there was just the three of us working. Because we started right from the outside. And to drive in, you know, to go in. Now we drove in about 200 feet, and we struck the coal. And it was a nice piece of coal. Then he starts to get big in the head. He goes to Seattle, and he gets somebody interested in Seattle, and he puts in $20,000 in the thing. Then we started to build a big chute. That would hold maybe 60 or 70,000 ton of coal. Then the trucks would come and haul it to wherever they were going to take it. Well then the coal petered out. The $20,000 was gone!

MB: How did you know where to start in, in the first place?

WT: Well you know, (she) lived behind the city hall. When Billie died, after a few years, she married a Gregory. He works as a hooker -- Bill Gregory. But her name is Dolly Gregory now. And she worked with Billie up there scratching the bluff up here. But, But they (tickle?) (stickin?) one another. You know, the wall's like that here, and you'll scratch around and here you'll find a little seam of coal, about that thick? See? And then they'll scratch and scratch and then maybe it gets a little thicker and thicker like that. You see? That's where it is, to find. See. And they just figure well I'll go in like that. Like you know.

MB: So it would be hard work. You'd have to move all that rock. That was on top and below it.

WT: We just went in solid (?) like that. Through the dirt, like you know, had to we/put our timbers -- it's all caved now. Garner goes up there, he made a road when he come into here, to this place. He fetched his bulldozer in, big bulldozer. But then he pushed a road up there, well he travelled up and down there with his car. four wheel drive car. Well in summer time even a small car like yours 'll go up there, but, you know -- we had a road only so far to our bunkers there. But that made a circle like that and goes
right up there on top of the bluff. But now he has a road from the opposite side coming. From South Wellington. From Plecas' slaughter house. The road just goes straight up, from there.

MB: I asked Glen Lewis how you find coal, what signs you look for, because they were looking all around, you know, for a mine to start on. And he told me something about a compass -- it's not clear how he -- looking for the black dirt, or something.

WT: Well you see, ever since we were kids, here, just where this barn is right here, there was a company drilled a hole there. Looking for coal in the valley here. And it's down about 500 feet, but salt water comes out of that hole. They say that Billie Richardson was always saying telling there was a seam of coal there but it was too dirty. So then when we were kids here in the valley here, just over here the Canadian Collieries, there's an old man over here, well he was only a young fellow then when we were kids, you know. But he passed away quite a few years ago now.

Mr. Evans. Well he owned 420 acres of land. Over here. That he owned. Well then, he owned part of the coal rights too. He did. Well they drilled over there on his property, I used to go once in a while and visit, you know. You could see the cores. (Demonstrates) Like this, but this that I seen was only rock, cause it's about this size, (demonstrates tubular shape about 8 or 9 inches long, about an inch through, or 1½ inches) they'd be all laying in boxes like, just you know. But as it comes out, then they just got long boxes, maybe 8 or 9 feet long. where they put the core back in, put it all together, like. Demonstrates laying these cores side by side in a box.

You'd see different fractures of rock, what kind of rock is it, and everything you're going through. So that's where -- everything's -- like today they just go and drill. They drill here, and they drill here, and then they have an area, and when they strike they know how thick it is, and they can estimate how much tonnage they got inside of an acre.
And everything else then. You know.

MR: Well these early settlers too, Lew Thatcher was telling me, they had some trouble with getting their coal rights, if they hadn't finished paying for their land by 1883. That was when the E&W -- he told me there were only two of them that could afford to fight it. And that was Thatcher and Neely Bowater. The rest couldn't afford to fight it.

But anyway, it went to the Privy Council in England, and he says the settlers won. But I was never clear what they won. Because they were done out of their money, evidently.

WT: When the Richardson's came here on the ship in 1850, and that's the Richardson family. I think there may be some of them living yet. I'm not sure, about 1850. Well then Mr. Richardson came here, well then a son was born, that's Ben. Well I don't know whether Ben -- I think it was Mrs. Richardson was married before. And then Ben had, to Mrs. Richardson, he had three sons. That's Benjamin, John, and Billie. Well the three sons is the ones that's got all the money off this estate, then.

And the coal rights. You see. Like you were just telling me, over in the Southfield mines there, the coal rights went over there, right across from over here, where I pointed that house to you -- their land run like that, and it run right over to that highway, practically to the main highway over there. Where you travel to go to Victoria. Where the land run -- the Richardson estate here. You know. Like there was 320 acres or something. They had. Or something like that. Well then, the Southfield mine was over there working then, that time there, -- they started to -- coal was taken out of there, and taken down to Morden mine. Well then they just abandoned it, and left it there.

Well then Mr. Fiddick owned land over there. On the other side over there. Well that's where Mr. Tatcher worked with him. There, with Mr. Fiddick, there, taking out coal. That was taken after the company's been in there, there's a certain amount of pillars left. That's like
You know, when you go in, you leave a piece that's maybe 60 foot square. Like you know, so's you got something to come back on. Like you know, they were pulling on them kind of things, like that. Well then when you're pulling back on that, everything just collapses. Because even that railroad that runs along there, they had to go and support that railroad that runs along that passenger train, that was all built with cogs and everything else under the -- they was going underneath there robbing -- you know, underneath the railroad. They're not supposed to, you see. So I guess the E&N had rights that, you know -- no coal must be taken underneath the track, like, you know. But you know how a person is, they take a nibble here and a nibble there, --

MB: And then it went down.

WT: And they had to go and cog it all up, you know. I don't know how it works now, whether they've filled it up with gravel or something, filled it up and tamp it right up. The Richardsons worked quite a bit over there. What I was going to say, when the Southfield was going over there, well then the Richardsons made a contract with the mining company. That, so much a ton royalty, they got off the coal. Well then the money had to go to a trust fund into Vancouver. And then when the youngest boy got to be 21 years of age, the money would be divided among the three boys. Well then when Billie got 21 years of age, the money was taken out, and that's how that white house over there, that little white house, over there, got built. The barn got built, they bought so many cows, machinery, and then the boys got a couple of thousand or so that was left. It should've been way more than that. But I guess the company went and gypped them! Having nobody there to watch, or -- when you've got somebody like that, you must have somebody there watching the coal coming out, and ever ton that comes out, and mark it down. You know.

MB: I heard they got 25 cents a ton for the first hundred thousand tons, and after that they just took the coal. It evidently only went up to a hundred thousand tons.
MB: But they had the same tipple, didn't they? The two mines had the same tipple?

WT: No -- I mean -- South Wellington -- I don't -- I remember Morden Mine -- I mean -- this Southfield Mine, it was built, you know, part of it -- I remember going down there. That was -- um -- whadyacallim -- oh, he was working in the power house, McGregor! Old man McGregor. His son is still living. He worked with his son, the only job I think his son has ever had, xxxxx was working for him the Hydro. Billie McGregor. Cause I played soccer with -- his father -- cause I remember going down there when that mine was still working. Cause his father -- cause the power house was still working. So they must have been getting coal from there yet. Bill McGregor. Bill McGregor is about five or six years younger than me.

MB: Tell me about where you went to school.

WT: The school was just up the Extension Road there. When you turn to White Rapids, and the Extension Road starts to take a turn to the right, and you just gradually go up that rodd for -- until you just come to -- there's a field on the left hand side there. That was our field to play soccer on. In among the peat soil there. That's where I got my leg broke, there. Playing soccer. I was 28. That was 1928 when I got my leg broke. So then I'd be 28.23 years of age. Cause I lost a good job in the mine then, cause you know, no union. So I had a hard time getting back in the mine. Because your occupation was only, either the bush, or the mine. No pulp mills, or nothing like that. No. Them days. There was just the older sister, and the older brother, didn't go to school. There was Albert went to school there, Lillian went to school there, Edward, and me, and Herbert, and My sister Elna. Billie's the youngest, in the family.

MB: When did your father settle here?

WT: 1912, in the spring of 1912.
I always remember coming from Ladysmith, on top of the team of horses, dragging the furniture, I was sitting on top of the furniture, on the wagon. (laugh)

MB: What was your father doing for a living?

WT: He was in the mine. When he came from the old country I think he came to Minnesota. Worked in the iron mines or something, because that was -- a lot of Finnish people came there, at that time. Then he came here, I guess it was in the 1890's, or something like that. I guess that's when mother came too, because mother was working in a boarding house, like you know -- a big boarding house. And I guess that's how it is they met there then. I think they met somewhere in Wellington. Wellington really was a town in those days. I think they had a kind of a tram even, going down, I heard somebody talking about a tramway, with buckets, coming down to Departure Bay there, and coming down into that area somewhere. I don't remember that, like, you know. But that's where he got a job there. And they were making the tunnel here at that time in Extension mine. They had been working up on top, like I told you. They Up on Gogo's farm there, and up on top. They had been working up there already. You know. But the coal was going down from that little slope of a hill, and coming down into Extension, and the coal was getting -- like, you know, separated, they usually separate like slack, and then there would be (pea) coal, and lump coal. Then there would be different cars, like, that coal would be in. And then it was taken down to Ladysmith. But it came through like, now when youse watch, when youse are going up to White Rapids road, you'll cross a road, now maybe about 2 or 300 yards on the White Rapids side, and going up the road, there's a road that diagonally crosses White Rapids Road, And it goes in there where Shawn is logging now. But all that property belonged to old man Evans. That was the fellow I was just talking about. Because the railroad went straight through in there, and it came right over to a big gravel pit, in there with the CPR track. And it came right over to the back side of the Fiddick's property.
And then it joined on to the CPR track until I guess the CPR was putting their line up here into Courtenay, at that time.

MB: That mine you're talking about at Gogo's, was that what they called Old Number One?

WT: Well, I don't know, because Dad never worked there. Because they had little -- well the second growth is growing up there now. Oh, up to a hundred feet high, at one time. Up through there. Because when I was working in the mines that's where the air shafts for our three different mines in Extension mine -- we had Number One, we had Number two, and then we had Number Three. Three sections. Because I worked in Number One mine. That was the first one. Because the tunnel was about -- oh, about one mile long, I guess, the tunnel. It just went in at a certain grade. Cause electric motors pulled the coal out. And then there'd be slopes going down, or inclines, going up, to wherever the coal was.

MB: So what year would this be when you started to work?

WT: I started up at the tipple in 1919. No, there was no explosions all the time that I been working in the mine. The only explosions I remember is in Granby, what they had there, when the coal would erupt and blew it back, like, there was a few miners killed that way. Or else there was men getting injured in the mines. But I think there was some up in Cumberland.

WT: The big explosion I remember I was a kid, we were living in Ladysmith. I know, was it 22 or 23 or 24 men lost their lives? Cause I remember, I know the idea Maurice was my father.

MB: 1909.

WT: Yes, cause I would be five years old. Because I remember, like a kid, going into the -- cause the Finnish people had a big hall -- and the coffins -- I can still -- in my head -- the coffins, stretched out, in the hall. Because my dad was never much to talk about mines. But I know my dad fetched out a few miners -- he was in that explosion -- he knew which way to go out, through another airway. And I think he took some men out with him.

WT: I was just going to show you, if it's here -- the Ladysmith Chronicle.
Did you get that picture of our train up in Extension -- it shows you all the miners with their heads sticking out? There's all kinds of pictures been taken like that.

MB: Yes, Ray Knight's collection. That's good.

WT: There's a picture taken its around here somewhere, of Dad with his miner's clothes on. --We had a wash house in South Wellington, and Extension.

MB: Well did they have a place to put the dirty clothes, and a place to put the clean clothes?

WT: No. Just one place. I think at Granby -- Granby was the best one. Cause when I used to go and play soccer, they had a beautiful wash house. Because it had a board like, in stalls. We were just like animals up in Extension. I think there was 700 of us in that Extension wash house. We had even top layers of lockers, like, you know. And then we had, oh I guess, bigger than this -- we had one shower place, and then there would be -- you'd go up to the door like from that side, and then there'd be another big shower place, -- the men was just all naked, having a wash in there. We used to wash each other's backs, you know, just the black dust coming off you. Yes, I think there was 6 or 700 of us working there at that time. That's working all through the Extension mines. But in the last, I think it dropped down to about 3 or 400.

MB: What did Extension look like when you first went up there?

WT: Oh Extension it was just like you see pictures of a little mining town, with little black houses, you know, where the soot comes all round, just these little houses, and people having a little bit of a garden, and that's all, like you know, that's all.

It's hard to describe a thing like that. Compared to today. What the young people got today, it's unbelievable, you know. When you think just what we went through, to give the youngsters what they got today.

MB: What about hotels,

WT: Oh there was quite a few hotels up there. But I don't remember only the
the Tunnel Hotel when I was up there. Because just by the White Rapids road, turn by White Rapids, just the crossing where Bonny Greenaway lives, he turns in to the right, there was a hotel there, they say. And then further up the road, in that second growth, there was another hotel somewhere. I don't know, I think there was five or six up there at Extension at that time. Hotels.

MB: I guess they moved them to Ladysmith, when they went down?

WT: I don't remember, because I wasn't born. But I know they took the men to move -- take your houses with you, but down to Ladysmith you must go. Well some of them stayed in Extension. But Dad and the majority of them went, to Ladysmith. Cause that's when Dad went up to Fifth Street, and built this house up on Fifth street, then. Cause it was a two-storey house, about five bedrooms in it, I think. Has to have, with nine kids!

MB: That was a good house, though, five bedrooms. Compared with a little house, what was it you said, somebody was living in --

WT: Oh yes, the size of this room here, like just going across from this wall to that there. Oh yes! There's some of them up there yet. And I just think, it just about makes me cry, --Phoeve Bowater -- she was a Mrs. Arbuthnot. She lives in one of them houses yet that was built in the 19th century! She still lives in it, and it's just collapsing and falling down. There's still some of them there yet, up there. It's unbelievable. When we were kids, there was no second growth, they had cut it all for the mines, years and years ago. There was nothing of that kind of stuff. When we came here to this farm here, we could look from here over to South Wellington. And all we had was little trees like this growing. And all this timber here has been growing up since we were kids.
130, 140 feet high.

MB: The big timber that was here --

WT: That was all logged, down to that sawmill, that I told you, down by Pecks lake, all dragged down there. I guess that was all taken in the 19th century. Sure, because we got the roads up there. Sometimes when you are come down here, in the spring, when it's nice and dry, I'll take you for a walk. And I'll show you the skidroads, where they dragged with a donkey situated, say, maybe half a mile away. And if the road was straight, well it didn't matter -- it would pull the logs on skids, be one log hooked behind the other. Coming along on skids. Logs 'd be buried in the ground so far, then there'd be a man with a paint brush painting tar or something on so they'd slip better, like you know. Then they would drag it to another donkey, then the rope would be hooked on to that one, and then they'd drag it again over toward Mushtown, and then down into the lake, like that. Dragged.

MB: And at the same time as they were logging, there was mining going on too.

WT: That's right. All them mines through Nanaimo, and Wellington, Northfield, and all over the place, was going. Cumberland.

MB: Were they shipping the lumber, or were they using it here?

WT: I guess they were using it locally, and shipping too. Mostly Chinamen running the machinery.

MB: I was wondering about the timber for the mines -- like mine timbers.

WT: Well the mine timber was all cut from around the -- DUNSMUIR owned so much of the timber, they had men cutting the timber for the mines. Men cutting and splitting.

MB: When you were a child, did you ever go into that old Southfield mine.

WT: No. The only mine that I went into, it was on the Richardson estate. That was after the mines were abandoned, they went in there to take what coal was left out, they worked there quite a few years. And the only mine that I went into was the other mine here, it was in South Wellington there. It was left, the mine was left. Then it reverted over to the Canadian Collieries.
And the mine filled up with water. And when the pumps pumped all the water out, they were standing just the same as if the miners had left it. It was unbelievable. You see, the water preserves everything. It preserves the timber, so that the air can't get at it. So everything's preserved. I admired the miners, because the walls was as straight as this, and just like somebody had -- you could paper the wall! With picks they had dug all the way up and with picks, and when they were putting up timber, they just notched a sliver in like that, and then in like that, and they put it up into the thing there, the timber. And up on top like that. It was just beautiful! Like that to see. Like the miners, the work they done in them days. Cause in our day, you see, we had, now um, well I didn't use a jack hammer until I was down in Number 10 mine. Number 5 mine. The air drill, to drilling. Which you're not supposed to use. Cause if there's gas around you're not supposed to use one. one of them things. But the bosses, they knew when the inspector was coming around, maybe the inspector would say I'm coming. And then we'd have to go hide them, or something, not use them. Use a hand drill!

MB: But you went in with the safety lamp though, before, eh?

WT: Well I was on three shifts. When we went in the mine there was a fire boss who'd have his own men, and you knew who he was, and you just went like that to him, and he'd say Go, or wherever you had to go. If your place was no good, or something, you'd have to go somewhere else. But at that time, he was the only one that had a lamp. He had the electric light on his head, and then he had the safety lamp for testing for gas. And he'd come along -- but before we went down in the mine, see, night shift would be coming off. Like get up on top at 7 o'clock in the morning, so the man who had been around there, testing each place to see how it was before we went down. But then I seen lots of times like, I worked in Reserve mine for a few months, I seen gas right down to the floor! Not see it, but I mean to say you could smell it. Well I could tell, if the fire boss put
the lamp down there, they turn the lamp down till it's a small flame. And then they just keep putting their lamp from the floor up, and they keep on going up, like and they can tell the percentage of gas, the other flame gets blue on top and it gets bigger and bigger and bigger. Then...

MB: And that's the methane?

WT: Yes, that gives you the idea of how much gas is there.

MB: Well what happened when you saw it down there?

WT: Well what the heck, you just keep on working. I was only on haulage then, you know, giving diggers cars. Cause even when you went up on the roof there, if you didn't watch you could get sick, with it, you know. But then what the heck, they were shooting, and everything else. There was air traveling -- a good quantity of air. The mines that I seen the most gas that was in Cumberland. I worked in Number 5 up there one year. They had long walls working, that's like pans, where they're on a slope you know, they work on a revolving business -- an eccentric. They shunt. An engine dug into the floor, and it has a piston on it, and its on eccentric, and it shifts always a hundred yards a pan, back and forth about that much. So that that little shunt shunts the coal down the wall. And there are maybe 8 or 9 or 10 men along a wall, shoveling on to this pan, coal, and the air is coming down the wall, you know, and the man's got to be putting up his post for timber. To protect himself like, you know. You can hear the gas working in the coal. Zzz! Zzzz! And the coal gas would be pushing the coal out. And it's just like, you've seen a sponge, and it was just like if you put the sponge tight like that, and all of a sudden you see the coal bursting, like that, coming out--

MB: That's what like they call the bumps, eh?

WT: The bumps maybe would happen -- but I never heard about it up in Cumberland.

But in Granby mine -- say for instance you're going in so far, and then maybe way over here there's a big pocket of gas, in the coal. Well then as you're going in further, you're weakening it. You're getting close to it, so more pressure's going to come, so all of a sudden it blows, as they say.
So maybe it'll push out from this wall to that wall, it'll push out maybe a hundred ton of coal. Along that narrow place. Well then the men are going to have to start scattering. But all the time I've been in a mine I've never had that happen to me, you know. But I've had caves come on top of me, buried in a cave. But nothing else. Managed to never even get a scratch, you know.

MP: That was when you were on haulage?

WT: Yes, I was on haulage when I got caved. And then I got underneath a cave there when -- a trip went off the track, anyway. And it smashed the timber down. Well then Mr. Clifford said, Waino, you've got to stay there and get ready for the next shift, you know. So then all of a sudden, more come down, but it happened that it landed on the laggin and you were just underneath, like that there, you know. Just saved your bacon, otherwise you'd have been dead. Like, you know.

MP: What about the mule?

WT: Oh, didn't haveno mule. Up in the mines that time there, on the last at Extension there, the last place I worked it was just all air. Run by air. Like you know you had little winches, little tuggers, as they called them, and you could just run the air down to a place and they'd just tie it to a post. and you could pull the car up or you could drop the car down, or anything. Like electric winches they had. Like in the mines. But in Extension mines there, I couldn't really say, but I think there was 2 or 300 mules there in Extension. When I was a kid. But I worked there on the tipple, I think it was -- there was mostly Chinamen, but then there was us white boys too. So then I think the Chinamen went on strike. So then we had to go down and fire the boilers. Learn to shovel the coal into the fire box, like you know, keep the steam up. And then I remember going down -- carloads of hay came from the Fraser valley or somewhere. You know, big flat cars right loaded up with hay, they were going unloaded into the barn there, and puttin it into the barn there up in the loft for the mules.
And then I had to go to work when the Chinamen was on strike, looking after the dam mules, you know. And Jesus, some of them are wicked, you know. Soon as they see you coming, they would squeeze over your end right up tight so's you can't get 'em: I'd have to go in front and crawl right over the top to get down to their head! (laugh) Oh yes. I got kicked quite a few times with the mules too. I got kicked here, and here, and like that -- never in the face, but always blasted in both legs, and in the chest, bang, like that. I've seen heels going on the sides of my head, in a dark room. There's one thing, all the time I was driving in a mine, I liked driving a mule better than a horse. A horse, he was more intelligent than the horse. Far more intelligence. He could go and practically crawl underneath this table, a mule, he'd go down on his knees and pull the car. You wouldn't believe it. And you could teach him to push a car up with his chest and when you couldn't get into a diggers place far enough, but if it was steep, you could learn him to push the car up with his chest on the car -- he would push the car in as far as the miner wanted the car. Like, you know. Sometimes I used to get mad at them! Two of them -- I killed one of them in South Wellington, Number 5 mine. One horse. Well, I just hit him on the head with a club. Cause it was Mr. Martin was boss, and then there was another boss. And they gave me this old horse to work with. And I'd practically have to do all the work. I'd practically be pushing the cars, and his tail chain would be just like this (demonstrates slack) not being pulling, you know. So I worked like that for a few days. I says that's enough. So I clubbed it across the ears, and down it went, you know. I went outside and I says to the boss, Mr. Martin, I says, My horse passed away.

Waino, what did you do? he said. Nothing, I said, it just died. I thought I was going to get fired, you know, but. When I came back the next day -- you know that man we were just talking about? Mr. McKinnon? He was good at breaking horses, and I got his horse that he'd broke. I got that horse that he had been breaking in, like. And then I really had a horse. I really
had to go, because it went like a streak, that horse did! Then another horse I crippled in Extension. Mind you it wasn’t my fault. It was hooked up on a to a lagging, so it wouldn’t run away, and the car took the wrong track, and then it went in and hit the other empties, and put it right into the cars. Broke its leg. Oh yes, what I mean to say, I’ve had my good days and bad days and everything else. I used to sometimes come home just about crying. When they were chasing you in the mine. Just brought tears in your eyes. Because you know you’ve got to keep on working, because you it’s the only job you’ve got. You go in the mine there, and you’re looking after about twelve men, and pulling coal, and then the boss would come along and that was old man Wilson. He was a good old boss, you know, but strict. He’d come walking along, well he was always morning shift anyway. Happened to come along, the digger would have his car loaded, or maybe just loading it, you know. The boss would say, How long has yur car been loaded? — Oh, I been waiting for an hour! — for a car. First thing he’d start running, looking for me. See, looking for the driver. He’d say, Waino, how come that miner’s been looking for a car for an hour? I says Heck, I says, it wasn’t long ago I just changed him! You know. I says, I got twelve men to look after! There’s other men got to get their bread and butter too! Oh you didn’t even have time for your lunch, anything to eat. You know. Just covered with mud! You was covered with mud! and corruption! And the mule was splashin the mud on you and going for — Well I always remember when we were young fellows, going in the mine, our mules would be there ahead of time, like. Way we’d go down the slope with our mules, and then each mule would know the place to go to. Well we’d throw the harness on it, but before we left we’d have our lunch up on top, up by the big winch. And leave our buckets there. So that meant to say when we were down there six hours, we’d go as hard as we could. But not to eat. Cause the men was on contract. Give the men cars. And then half past two, if it was morning shift, quit; and come as hard as you could, all the way up the tunnel, chasing the mule. Back out to the thing. I used to cry sometimes when you’d see the work you had to do, right there.
ME: The mules knew when it was quitting time too.

WT: Oh yes! They had a good idea. They knew just when to come home. Like you just threw the harness off and tell 'em to go, and away they'd go, beat the band. There along the tunnel there, for a mile long. Sometimes they'd grab ahold their tail and slide along the rail, holding on to their tail, just dragging their foot along the rail. Getting a ride — (laugh!). Their collar was always on them when they went in to the mine. The collar was put on them. All we had to do, was like the harness and the chains and the (crap) stick the chain goes off that... Oh, some mules were really good, some beautiful mules, but it was a shame to see them have to work double shift, you know.

MB: How long did they live?

WT: Oh some of them was up there quite a few years, up to 10 and 12 years. There was even some of them committed suicide behind the barn. There was a hole there, and some of them just went into the hole. There was an old mule, Hopsy. Hopsy was a good old mule, and other ones there, Jack, you know.

I liked them, you know, good strong mules. But I didn't like horses. They were very finickity, horses. You know for instance if you're going into a place that's only a certain height. And it touches it neck or its collar or something, it just goes like that! (slaps fist into hand). Bang! It just goes and darts, like, whereas the mule would just go down and bend down, the mule. Whereas a horse, oh a horse will just go like a bullet. The same way as if you try to get through between -- there's loads here, and empties here, and you got just a narrow place to go through, the mule will just pull its tummy up like this and walk through like that. A horse he'll go crashing through, the horse, you know.

MB: I wonder why they changed from mules to horses?

WT: Well I guess they started putting air winches in and different things, in them days. But mules were very expensive animals. They all came from the United States at that time. They were paying quite a price for them mules.
in them days too.

MB: I heard a mule was worth more than a man.

WT: Oh absolutely! Men in them days, when a man got killed, in them days, a miner, they'd just throw him on top of a car, the missis had to come and get him. That's all up there, in the mine. That's why we got that big monument down in Victoria, Dunsmuir castle! There, made out of the miners blood, there!

(end of Side 1)

Side 2 - WT: ...we had the union going here before they did, the United States. And the amount of men that was killed in there was just unbelievable. You know, in the United States, men. And the millions of tons of coal that they've dragged out of the mines in Pennsylvania and Virginia and Kentucky, and them states. Them people lived just like -- it was only a matter of the 1940's when -- you've seen the Kentuckians, where they sit on the verandahs and they're playing their guitar with their bare feet, well that's the darn coal miners, in them countries, there!

WT: I remember when I was a kid, in 1912, just when the strike came on, just after we got here, when the miners strike came. Cause I was a kid, going to school. Because there was the scabs on the other side of the camp, and men was on the other, and they were shooting at one another with rifles. (laugh). Then they sent the militia. Cause I remember, going to school, they got those little huts where the man stands in, we hadda go past them. They had a sentry standing there watching, so that men couldn't go -- you know. But us kids went by. Here was a man in the Canadian army uniform, standing guard there, and this little hut, like, you know. I always remember that, like, you know.

MB: So the men couldn't go where?

WT: Well they had to keep them separated, you know, like away down from the mine, down there.
WT: Well I guess they've told you their history of Guthrie, Sam?
He was one of our Members of Parliament for the CCF? He was a good man.
He was put in jail. Bill Dowater was put in jail, that time. Cause they still got days, I think they are going to have Sam Guthrie day in Ladysmith again here. I see in the paper. (Talks about a man who says never mind the past -- look to today!)
I says, yes, it's sure different today. You just got to look out the back and see the new subdivision, see the beautiful homes people got, and you got to see what the miner had to go through, in them days.
Cause I remember my dad when I was a kid. No wash house or nothing, on that train, just come down into Ladysmith there, where Crown Zellerback has got their office, That's where the train landed, down there. And us kids would sometimes go down there and meet Dad, and walk up you know, and you'd walk up all that hill, Robins hill, that's a big hill, going up there, and packing his lunch bucket. To see if he left a sandwich for you or something in his bucket, you know? (laughs)
MB: How many kids used to go and meet their dads like that?
WT: Oh there was a lot of kids used to go. I remember when I was a kid there in Ladysmith there, the summer holidays, you know, the Finnish people had cows, like one cow or two cows, there, and then the summer holidays came, so many of us kids would have to take the cows down to the beach down there, where the Canadian Collieries was. And look after them, so they wouldn't -- we took 'em across the track, and then they would eat down there, the green grass was growing down there. And then we'd fetch 'em back in at night. That was our holidays like down there that, watching the cows. Running around/bare feet. But I don't remember very much about starting school. My sister fetched me to school. I think the school is still there yet. I know the big school is still there. You didn't start till you were seven years of age then.
MB: How did your dad get started with the land? on 1st Ave. & Roberts St.
MB: I don't know. There was a butcher shop there, / in Roberts, which
may be called after him. He had a butcher shop right at the bottom on
1st Avenue and Roberts Street. He had a butcher shop right there. Well
he bought it off him, the property. That was the 70 acres. That was the
estate, the old estate, 70 acres. Cause the other 100 acres was bought by
my brother that passed away, with the farmer, he bought it off old Evans.
Ned Evans. Well he didn't buy it off old Ned Evans, he bought if off Mrs.
Morton. Her husband was a lawyer in town. And she got control of all the
property that old Ned Evans -- she looked after him in his last days, and
Mrs. Morton got the property.
MB: Your day must have wanted to get out of the mines and get into the--
WT: He wanted to get his children out of the city out to the country. He
figured it'd be better for 'em. But when we came here, well there was
nothing, you know. There was just stumps, and all logged. Only an odd big
tree that was maybe five foot through, six foot through. The donkey wouldn't
pull, you know, wouldn't take. There was just part of an old house here,
and then Dad hired -- his brother came, and I think the other brother came,
and somebody else came here and give him a hand to get started. And then
after so many years he got another Finlander from Chase River to come and
help him build it. Because it was a big verandah -- the whole
length of the front of the house was all big verandah here. And then on
the back was another part of the house with a big verandah and there was a
big verandah over there. Well then the brother that was the farmer, he
destroyed that piece of the house. So then I started to fix the house up.
Here, in the fifties. We didn't have electricity until the fifties.
And we had to do all our work ourselves. The (Blackwells) came to this farm
here, He died of a heart attack in the Safeway butcher shop. Them people. So we went to see him about getting juice into the farm
here. So he says Okay, you slash the road, you make all the poles,
and dig all the holes. So that's what we done. All they had to do was to climb the poles and put the line in. And the cross (Finnish people very cooperative) Oh yes! I remember Dad when he was working in the mine, he would hire a man in the spring. Just to clean. We only had a horse and a couple of cows, at that time. And chickens, and pigs, you know. He was just there, shooting, and at the roofs with a pry, a big pry, and working like a--

MB: You must have had a good living.

WT: Oh yes, we always had vegetables, we had potatoes, and we had meat, and stuff like that. Not like today. I got money, I can go to town and buy what I want.

MB: Did you grow potatoes on the peat?

WT: Oh yes, that was a beautiful field! Sometime when you come again I'll show you pictures of us weeding carrots there, in rows about 200 yards long. We'd grow corn down there sometimes 12, 14 feet high, sunflower, same height. And then we'd have maybe 15 or 20 ton of potatoes. Carrots, mangolds, everything else, we'd have. And we belonged to the potato board that time and we'd sell potatoes too. When the mines were on strike Dad would give whatever we had, to the miners. It was always netted gem we grew, never anything else, like, you know.

MB: Will you tell me something about Mr. McKinnon?

WT: All I knew was that he lived in Cedar district, and he worked in Number five mine. I remember him breaking mules and horses in the mine there. After he lost his hand. Cause he had a hook on his arm. And I would just marvel at the man breaking a horse and -- because I never had -- they never gave me that job, you know. Breaking a horse in a mine, you know. But I did get that one horse, because I remember him driving him with lines, to teach him. Because once you taught a horse to go Ha, and Gee, and Stop, and Go, you see, because you didn't drive him like a mule, you told him Ha and Gee, left and right, you know, the animal just went. In the pitch dark they could just go, you know.
ME: I guess they knew their way maybe by the tracks.

WT: Oh they just seemed to have -- It's unbelievable what I've seen animals do in a mine. I've seen cars run away, for instance, like I was going down hill, like the cars that we had in Extension mine had brakes on. We could sit on the car like that and we could make the car go slower or faster if it was going down an incline; But we'd turn the mule loose ahead of the car -- we'd hook the tail chain on to its collar, right on to its hames there, and tell the mule to go ahead. But if the car started to get away or something then that mule, if there was a kind of a hole in there, it would just duck into a hole. Out of the road. Yes. Down hill. Marvelous, you know. Unbelievable. I've seen me, even when the cars got away from me, and this was a horse though, that horse jumped right on top of the car. And the other cars piled on top of it like that. (smashes hand into fist.) Yes.

ME: Yes, Johnnie Pecnik told me about one little pony, it was ... he liked it too. But the car went right over it, squashed it, killed it. It couldn't get away.

WT: (re horse above) That was a mare too. My dad wanted to buy it of off Canadian Collieries, but they wouldn't sell it. Dad wanted it for the farm. Gee, it wasa beautiful horse. It was called Lady. I drove that horse quite a few times. I even drove that horse in Cumberland. When I went up to Cumberland to work on the faces in Cumberland, the mules was down in the mine, they had the stables right down at the foot of the shaft, nice and warm there. I was always one that would wait and go up last, you know the men was always walking over the top of each other to get the first one up in the cage, because only so many could go up in the cage. At a time, see. Men was coming down, men was going up. You see. (laugh) So I was in the barn there, keeping warm, like waiting for till the men had just about finished. And I goes and walks around,and I see this horse, and I said, Hullo, Lady!, The mule boss comes and says to me, That's not Lady! I says I know Lady! I says, that horse come from South Wellington.
And I says that's a Canadian Collieries trick, anyway. You know. Like Dunsmuir and all these big companies -- they take a horse from that mine, they put it in another mine. All right, I bought that horse, that I put it on the expenses. Anything they done like that, machinery, or anything else, went from one mine to another -- that's expenses. That's like when their taxes come like that, well they got all this business. -- All these big companies are so wise, and I suppose for the same thing as a good man. Like, you know.

I worked two years as a boss. In a pole business. Two years I had the experience of men. In 66 and 67, I worked up in Haslam Creek and Sugar Loaf Mountain for B.C. Forest Products, taking out poles. Three of us. That's where I had the experience of good men and bad men. It used to make me cry to see men -- you know, some men you go hire them and say We're experience in doing the job, you know, making poles you know. And so you say All right.

I'll give you the tools and I'll show you where to go and what to do, and then after a couple of days I go and look and never done nothing. And I'd be just about tearing my hair out of my head. And I'd say, Well, I guess that's it. That's the finish of it, just down the road youse go. And they'd start to cry. Well I says, I can't afford to keep you, you se haven't produced nothing, I says, youse are on contract. You said you knew how to do it. I says, I can go and make $25 or $30 or $40 dollars a day. I says, youse guys ain't made nothin'. And I says I've still got to pay you a certain amount, you know. So the young fellow, I guess he was the son in law, he come from Fernie, you know. He says, I bet you can't do what I done! Well I says, I can't do everything, son! You know. He says, I worked in the mines in Fernie! I says, that's one dam job I can do! (laugh) He shut up right away! No, I had quite a bit like that.

You know, you want to get men and you can't get men. I said Every working man should go to be a boss. And to see what other men do to you, and how the slough off on you and everything. And do what they do, and cause damage or some other thing, you know. That's why I say a good man is a good man. He's worth his money, a good man. You know.
WT: (speaking of company hiring union men because they were better men?)

He says: There were a lot of them working at Extension (scabs). The head
lamp man he was a scab. (should we take this out?)

(missed some here) intentionally

WT: My dad was in beautiful shape. He worked till he was 68, in the
mines. And then he just quit. Well you take a man that's in good shape,
68, and then he don't do nothing, and then he started to lose his balance
as they says, you know, he could just fall down. And he was always walking
to Chase River, to visit. Cause their friends were down there. And then
he got pneumonia and then died. Then mother wouldn't live any more. Mother
just pined away and passed away, mother. You see. Dad died in 40 and
mother in 41.

WT: I was just pallbearer for one of the Finns that die. Mrs. Sirio (?)

Mr. Sirio died in 72. He was one of the Finns, like my father was, Mr.
Nieta, and my dad, they -- I guess my dad must have had pretty good schooling
in the old country. Because they belonged to the lodges and they were the
head ones you know, doing the talking, and anything else, you know, talking
to different things. Like Mr. Nieta, at Chase River. His house is still
standing there, across from the Chase River school, that big two storey house.
He passed away. He's got a son that lives down in Youbou.

MB: When did they build the Finn Hall?

WT: It was built before I came down to the farm here. Must have been built
in the 19th century. Cause the Finnish people all got together, like, you
know. And built it. Because I know people like old John Nieta would
know everything about it because they was the ones that were working on it.
I remember going in there to concerts and everything else, the Finnish --
our mother and father -- their social life they really got on good. They
would go like, there'd be a dance and a concert, Then we (They) 'd say
we'll give you a ride! Never mind! They'd walk, that two miles, dance till
ten or eleven o'clock, walk home. You know. And this house was always full
of people. In the summer time. I've seen as high as ten and fifteen people who'd come and visit at this house. And I've seen even kids, a bunch of kids would come, and we had to sleep crossways in the bed, that way! When we were kids, you know.

WT: The Finnish people had a band. I remember the Finnish band in Ladysmith when we were kids. And then when they would come around at Christmas time playing, you know, go from house to house, and dad throwing out the money. They played and sang. They had their churches and everything else, because my oldest sister went to church, and after school she went to learn the Finnish language besides going to school. and learn the English language. She could read and write it, like. But we never, because we moved and came here. Then we got away from that, you're just in the bush. In the timber.

MB: How long did they keep that up in Ladysmith?

WT: It went on for quite a few years, until the Finnish people started dropping out because Dad always went down there, because they had their own lodge, like. Dad and mother used to have -- two Finnish papers would come all the time. There's an awful lot of Finnish people come from the old country now -- thousands come from the old country. I meet them now, quite a few of them, (speaks of Mr. Sealanders, who was his scaler, has been to old country three or four times)

His ticker started to go haywire, because he had a steam bath, and I used to go every Friday there, to the steam bath there, like, you know. So now I go to a different place, I go on 9th Street. That's on Park Avenue and then up to 9th street. Back of the Simpson's Sears, back in the bush there. Carl (Fillicka?) he works as a longshoreman, well he's got a steam bath. So they told me to come maybe once or twice a week. I go there. I been going there about 3 or 4 years now. We used to have our own all the time. Yes, we had a big one in Ladysmith. It was a monster one. You could get about 12, 14 people in there. So then Mother and Dad built one out of logs. Here. And it was destroyed in 1940.
Brother just knocked it all down, because the logs started to get rotten.

WT: What was the only thing! It was our bathroom. Because I remember

as a kid, at that time, the oldest brother and dad washing in the middle

of the floor here in a tub! Right in this kitchen floor here. We used

but when we had the sauna we could really soak it out. (I said)
to have a 60-gallon barrel of water -- you'd heat it up by a big fire,

you know, and then we'd just have there. We had one of them big wooden

barrels, you see, and we had the fireplace made and then big coils made,

and when you had the fire made it heated up the hot water. Although when

we were kids we had to pack water. That was our job when we were kids

here on the farm to -- every Saturday the steam bath had to be lit,

and then we'd go in there to have our bath, you know.

and then you'd have a real good steam. Like the same one where I
goto (Willika's?)
go to now, they got the real Finnish one there. Just a smaller one,

version. I've been in the ones in hotels, you know, but they only got

a little bit of rocks, like this here, you know. I take it up to a
temperature of 200. About 90. You know.

WT: Yes, we'd just throw it on to the rocks. We had a big pile of rocks,
you know, then you'd have a real good steam. Like the same one where I
go to (Willika's?)
go to now, they got the real Finnish one there. Just a smaller one,

version. I've been in the ones in hotels, you know, but they only got

a little bit of rocks, like this here, you know. I take it up to a
temperature of 200. About 90. You know.

MD: I bet you liked that when you were mining.

WT: Oh yes. But usually it was just once a week.

(Re beer parlors) He does not drink.

WT: I remember when I was playing soccer, we had to go and change in the
hotels, and the team would have to go down like where the miners was.

But the miners was staying in the hotels then. There was showers down
the basement, like the Queens. and (couldn't remember other)
I stripped in the Queen's for playing soccer, and this other one, and the Globe too. And that's the biggest (?0 up in Front street. And I stripped in the Newcastle too. You know, to go and change into your togs to go and play soccer. The person to go and talk to about how many beer parlors in Nanaimo is Benny, Joe Benny. He was the one that had the Commercial beer parlor. He's the man that's got quite a bit of money in real estate on Front Street there. Him and Giovando, you know. But Joe Benny, he knows the history of all these hotels.

The people from Sointula they used to come visiting here to the house here. And mother and father went to visit there, Sointula. Yes, quite a few times, people came from Sointula. And I met, but I have never met the younger generation. I spent my life just working, and I'd go and see soccer games, football games, hockey games, and I'd go hunting.

Every year

MB: It seems like hunting was a very important thing here in Nanaimo.

WT: Well the miners they just had to go in the back woods and hunt. There was quite a few deer around here on the farm. I've seen as high as fifteen and sixteen in the fields here. When we were kids we used to see a lot of bear round here. You remember when we were kids, when this was all big timber, going picking wild blackberries? And here would be a bear, sticking its nose out, you know. And hi-tailing off as far as he could go! Same as when we were walking up going to school. A bear would walk across the trail in front of us, and we decided what would we do, go home? No, I guess we can't go home, because we'd just have to go back again. So we just had to keep on going! Cause mother and father would just send us back, you know.

WT: This Mr. Kayovsky, I always remember him, I was a kid working on the tipple. He was driving the/wagon, you know, hauling coal around Extension. And we'd pick a car up that was pretty good, you know. And then we'd turn it down the track to the place where they put it down the chute.
And then dump the coal, we'd talk to Joe, down below there.

(end of tape)